



DOE Mentoring Program Basics

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DOE Mentoring Program

Overview


The DOE Mentoring Program provides enriching experiences through reciprocal relationships and opportunities for **GROWTH** while sharing knowledge, leveraging skills, and cultivating talent. It provides a series of developmental experiences for matched mentoring pairs and designated groups. The primary goal of the relationships is personal and professional growth and development for individuals. Through the mentoring relationship, mentors have the opportunity to coach, guide and share experiences, knowledge, and skills which will contribute to the Mentee's growth. Mentoring opportunities will vary according to the needs and interests of the Mentee and the organization. Mentoring relationships require time, commitment, and clear plans of action.

More and more government agencies and organizations are creating mentoring programs for various reasons. From increased morale to increased organizational productivity and career development, the benefits of an organization that actively supports mentoring are numerous. However, successful mentoring programs do not just happen. Organizations must first make a strong business case to demonstrate why the organization should devote the time, attention and resources required to make a formal mentoring program work. Reasons for establishing a mentoring program must be linked to the organization's mission. For example, if DOE forecasts additional growth in a specific job series, the agency may want a mentoring program to help prepare high-potential employees for future managerial positions in that series.

Using This Guide

If you are interested in continuous learning and self-development, the DOE Mentoring Program is for you. This guide will provide you with general information regarding mentoring at DOE. Learning about the program is the first step to facilitate effective Mentor/Mentee partnerships. It is to be used in conjunction with one of the following two documents depending on your role as Mentor or Mentee:

 ***Tools for Mentee Growth***

 ***Tools for Mentor Growth***



Mentoring At DOE

Program Objectives

The program encourages all Senior Executive Service (SES) members, GS-15 and below level employees to serve as Mentors and/or Mentees. The goal is to cultivate talent at all levels within the organization. The mentoring program is open to all DOE employees.

The specific objectives of the program are to:

- 🌱 Increase employee engagement and job satisfaction
- 🌱 Transfer tacit (knowledge through experience) and explicit (knowledge that can be documented) knowledge
- 🌱 Expand cross-functional knowledge
- 🌱 Expand leadership, coaching, and interpersonal skills
- 🌱 Facilitate personal and professional growth
- 🌱 Leverage diversity and experience to provide learning and development opportunities

Program Benefits

Engaging in a mentoring relationship is critical to anyone who wants to take charge of their career and help others grow and develop. Not only do individuals benefit from mentoring but, the organization also benefits from successful partnerships.

ORGANIZATIONAL BENEFITS

- 🌱 Provides the ability to offer flexible learning relationships that can be conducted face-to-face or at a distance
- 🌱 Encourages participants to take charge of their own learning and make informed decisions about how they will accomplish learning goals

MENTEE BENEFITS

- 🌱 Increases knowledge and skills
- 🌱 Expands professional network by making valuable contacts within the DOE
- 🌱 Learns about other organizations within the DOE
- 🌱 Enhances and expand leadership abilities
- 🌱 Receives guidance in assessing professional development needs
- 🌱 Increases opportunities for career advancement

MENTOR BENEFITS

- 🌱 Allows opportunities to share experiences, network, and expertise with another DOE employee
- 🌱 Invests in the future by actively participating in developing future leaders
- 🌱 Obtains a fresh perspective and new insights
- 🌱 Develops stronger leadership and coaching skills
- 🌱 Offers an opportunity to pass on a legacy

Clarifying Definitions

The mentoring relationship is a special relationship built on trust, encouragement, and targeted development. A Mentor is a teacher, coach, and advisor who provide guidance and opportunities for learning and professional growth to another employee. Mentee and protégé are used interchangeably. In past DOE Mentoring Programs, the term protégé was used, however, as we reinvent the program, we're adopting the term Mentee. Likewise the two terms, "coach" and "mentor," are often used synonymously, however, there's a clear distinction between them. The definitions below clarify each term.

Mentee—An individual seeking assistance from a more experienced person to help speed up the learning process. Also, called a Protégé.

Mentor – An experienced person, outside of the direct chain-of-command, whose purpose is to help an individual heighten their potential and grow. A mentor is a teacher, coach, and advisor who provide guidance and opportunities for learning and professional growth to another employee.

Coach – A formal coach is a certified subject matter expert (SME), usually external to the organization. An informal coach is an individual that is usually internal to the organization. Their purpose is to develop a particular skill.





Program Requirements

Participation Criteria

The two criteria to be a Mentee or Mentor in the DOE Mentoring Program are the same. You must have the following: 1) a passion and interest in continuous learning and self-development and 2) the willingness and motivation to participate and the commitment to fulfill the requirements of the program.

Program Requirements

Mentoring relationships work best when individuals are committed to meeting regularly. The intent of the Mentoring Program is to create valuable learning experiences and developmental opportunities for Mentees and Mentors. Participation in the program does not guarantee Mentees a promotion or selection into a future position. Supervisors should encourage their employees to apply for the Mentoring Program, as they should model self-development by participating as well. Mentees should also be encouraged to become future Mentors.

Participation in the Mentoring Program is based on a 6-month or 12-month partnership. To actively participate in the program the Mentee and Mentor are required to do the following: 1) sign a Mentor/Mentee Partnership Agreement at the beginning of their program; 2) Mentoring Action Plan to document established mentoring goals and planned activities; and 3) conduct 3-month and 6-month (for one year partnerships) check-ins.

Mentors and Mentees will be expected to complete designated on-line training.

For Mentees: ***Achieving Success: the Help of a Mentor***

For Mentors: ***Mentoring Effectively***

In addition, Mentees and Mentors must meet the requirements of the program listed below.

Meet no less than two hours per month for the duration of their partnership

Plan to participate most scheduled program activities

Complete program evaluation forms in order to help make recommendations to refine the program for future years

Initially, the Mentor and Mentee should meet more frequently to build a trusting partnership; however, as the relationship progresses, meetings may take place less frequently. Such meetings will normally be held during working hours.



Program Responsibilities

Overall Responsibilities

Successful mentoring programs require participation and commitment from various stakeholders throughout the organization. DOE Senior Management has acknowledged the importance of mentoring by allocating resources and volunteering their time to support the program's activities. The following stakeholders share responsibilities for the Program's success:

Heads of Departmental Elements/Program Coordinator Responsibilities

- 🌱 Hold senior executives accountable for mentoring and coaching employees
- 🌱 Support program by allowing Mentors and Mentees adequate time for full participation
- 🌱 Ensure the Mentoring Program is operating effectively in their organizations
- 🌱 Facilitate, encourage, and support the Mentor/Mentee relationship

Field Training Manager Responsibilities

- 🌱 Work closely with the Field Organizations and the Headquarters Mentoring Program Manager to ensure that there is Department-wide program coordination
- 🌱 Promote the program and assist in the identification of potential mentors
- 🌱 Identify and arrange for activities, speakers, instructors, etc. in support of quarterly program activities
- 🌱 Provide input for program evaluation
- 🌱 Follow-up with mentors and mentees to validate progress

Mentee Responsibilities

Mentees must also be willing to “stretch” to try new things and take risks. This is a true way to grow, develop, and achieve higher levels of performance. In addition, Mentees must do the following:

- 🧠 Take an active role in learning, continuous self-development, and **GROWTH**
- 🧠 Be open and willing to accept feedback and coaching
- 🧠 Communicate openly about developmental goals
- 🧠 Initiate and be prepared for the mentor/mentee discussions by preparing an updated resume, agenda, and professional goals
- 🧠 Display a positive attitude to learning
- 🧠 Create a learning plan based on developmental needs
- 🧠 Utilize available resources as part of the program
- 🧠 Commit to meeting with mentor no less than 2 hours per month
- 🧠 Participate in training and other program activities
- 🧠 Provide input for program evaluation

Mentor Responsibilities

Mentors must be willing to spend time with the Mentee to develop a good working relationship that is trusting and honest. In addition, Mentors must do the following:

- 🧠 Share professional experiences and knowledge with mentee
- 🧠 Provide guidance in developing current job skills and setting realistic career goals
- 🧠 Offer insight into the DOE culture, values, and mission
- 🧠 Offer positive and constructive feedback
- 🧠 Assist mentee in developing a learning plan based on developmental needs
- 🧠 Serve as a resource and unbiased advisor
- 🧠 Model self-development and continuous improvement
- 🧠 Look for opportunities for **GROWTH** by learning new perspectives and ideas brought by mentees
- 🧠 Commit to meeting with mentee no less than 2 hours per month
- 🧠 Participate in training and other program activities
- 🧠 Provide input for program evaluation

In the event that the mentoring partnership is not working as effectively as it could, either the Mentor or the Mentee should notify the Program Manager to express their concerns. The program Manager will assist in obtaining coaching and counseling for the pair. If the relationship does not improve, a no fault termination will occur. That is either the Mentor or Mentee can terminate the relationship with the understanding that both parties may participate in other Mentor/Mentee partnerships.

Program Manager Responsibilities

- 👤 Manage and coordinate Mentoring Program activities
- 👤 Serve as the central point of contact on all aspects of the program
- 👤 Market the Mentoring Program and recruit potential Mentees and Mentors
- 👤 Provide orientation and training form mentors, mentees, and supervisors
- 👤 Consult with mentees, mentors, and supervisors to ensure needs are being met
- 👤 Arrange for the design, delivery, and evaluation of core training and quarterly activities
- 👤 Conduct an annual evaluation of the program with input from mentors, mentees, supervisors, and program coordinators
- 👤 Track career paths of mentees
- 👤 Frequently check with program coordinators to handle and resolve any issues
- 👤 Seek opportunities to continuously improve the program's effectiveness and enhance program participant's experiences

Program Support Staff Responsibilities

- 👤 Assist with program manager responsibilities
- 👤 Provide on-going support to participants in the administration of the online mentoring tool
- 👤 Coordinate the execution of program training and activities
- 👤 Prepare program reports for DOE management

Supervisor Responsibilities

The Mentee is encouraged to disclose the mentoring relationship to his or her supervisor and should make his or her supervisor aware of the DOE Mentoring Program requirements. Supervisors can be real assets in the mentoring process, even from the sidelines. The Mentee's supervisor can serve as a resource for ideas on the Mentee's development and growth. The supervisor's role in the mentoring process is one of support and encouragement.

As needed, supervisors should make adjustments in assignments and workloads to allow Mentees adequate time to participate in the program. Mentees are encouraged to look to their supervisors as a potential source of support for their mentoring activities.

Supervisors can support the Mentor/Mentee partnership by:

Providing input – When prompted by the Mentee, supervisor can be an excellent source of input into the mentoring goal-setting process. He or she has observed the Mentee on the job, and should know where the Mentee's strengths and weaknesses lie.

Setting parameters – The Mentee may feel more comfortable spending time in mentoring activities, if he or she has negotiated clear agreements with the supervisor about the time to be spent on mentoring activities. The supervisor can help the Mentee prioritize work assignments in order to accommodate the mentoring activities.

Providing support and feedback – The supervisor can support the mentoring relationship simply by asking how it is going, offering support, and providing feedback. He or she might also help the employee find developmental opportunities in day-to-day activities.



Program Expectations

Based on comments we have received from participants in our program, we have outlined a few things you should not expect from mentoring.

- **Don't expect immediate results:** It takes time to develop a mentoring relationship. Getting to know a person is a gradual process. Sometimes a Mentee is shy, awkward or embarrassed about bringing up a specific issue and needs time to approach a Mentor about it. Mentors should assure the Mentee that their conversations are confidential. Also, schedules can get tight at times and make it difficult to keep in regular contact. Keep a positive attitude and keep communication open.
- **Don't expect your Mentee to work for you exclusively.** At times it may be desirable for a Mentee to work on a specific assignment to learn or develop a skill. In most cases, it is best if the task is a sample assignment, rather than a client project. If you feel comfortable giving your Mentee an assignment, get the supervisors approval.
- **Don't expect your mentor to give you a job.** While some mentoring relationships can lead to paid work, expecting your mentor to make job offer is overstepping the boundaries of the relationship. A Mentor can be a valuable resource for introductions and job leads. Your mentor is there to help and teach, not to hire. Mentors can also be added as a reference on resumes.



Mentoring Activities

Partnership Activities

Partnership activities are specific to each Mentor/Mentee partnership based on established mentoring goals. The Mentor/Mentee Partnership Agreement will outline the relationship and commitment that both parties have for the program. The Mentoring Action Plan will outline activities and interaction between both parties during the partnership. These goal-oriented documents will add focus to the program. In short, planned and structured activities are essential to ensure that both the Mentor and Mentee have a successful and positive learning experience.

Consider what both parties want to get out of the mentoring relationship and how you can do this best. The list below provides various partnership activities.

- General discussions about issues, how to solve them, and other ideas
- Sample projects or exercises that the Mentor can assign and review
- Work together on actual projects the Mentee is working on that the Mentor can review (Be sure to discuss whether a Non-Disclosure Agreement is required.)
- Attending conferences, trade shows and local group events together

Program Activities

In addition to your partnership activities, mentoring program activities will be scheduled throughout the year. Activities will include various learning events that will be held for the Mentor and Mentee to facilitate an effective partnership and promote growth for both individuals. Scheduled events will include training and information sessions that demonstrate each person's commitment to growth and self-development.



Program Evaluation

3-Month and 6-Month Check-ins

Through the use of the Mentor/Mentee Partnership Check-In, each pair will know how the relationship is going. They will also be able to ensure that both participants are benefiting from this experience. This allows the partnership to remain on track and continuously improve. The check-in also serves as a check on the level of support the pair is receiving from the Mentee's supervisor and the DOE Mentoring Program Manager in order to facilitate a successful partnership.

Mid-term and Final Evaluations

Evaluation of the program is one of the most important components of the DOE Mentoring Program. Participants' reactions are necessary for program expansion and program improvements. Mentors and Mentees will participate in a mid-term review of the program to include a discussion session with the Program Manager to identify and address issues relevant to the success of the program. A final evaluation of the program will be conducted in collaboration with all Program Coordinators and the HQ Program Manager.

Key performance measures will be utilized to determine program impact on participants and organizations. The program evaluation will include both qualitative and quantitative performance measures. Quantitative performance measures which will be tracked include: promotions, changes in positions, changes in organizations, and departure from DOE. Qualitative feedback to measure program success will be obtained through quarterly workshops, mid-term reviews, focus group sessions, and written evaluations. The results of program evaluations, both quantitative and qualitative, will be used to institute results-oriented program improvements.

Program Principles

Genuine interest—Express a sincere interest in continuous self-development

Reciprocal relationships—Mentor and mentee should learn from each other

Ongoing dialogue—Share successes and failures as opportunities to learn

Work together—Effective mentoring requires teamwork and commitment

Trust—Information share between the mentee and mentor is confidential

Heighten potential—Inspire new possibilities to stretch and grow



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